

Gemeinsam lachen. On speaker-hearer interaction when using wordplay in German spoken language

Nicolò Calpestrati
Università degli Studi di Milano

Humor fulfills numerous functions in everyday communication, representing a common element present in every linguistic system. As Kruger states (1996) humor

stands for as one of the few universals applicable to all people and all language throughout the world.

Humor can be conveyed through different techniques, among which punning wordplay stands out, given its widespread use both in everyday spoken language and in the written production. Wordplay, to which people react and interact in different ways, can be regarded as a rhetorical device, working on different levels (acoustic, semantic, morphological, syntactic and lexical) and is commonly used in speech dialogues for various purposes. This study draws attention to the classification of recurring patterns when using wordplay in German spoken language. A considerable number of spontaneous conversations will be analyzed in order to highlight the main recurring manifestations and responses to the use of punning in speaker-hearer interaction. All the data will be taken from two corpora, the *Datenbank für Gesprochenes Deutsch* and online videos of German talk-shows available on the internet (e.g. NDR Talk Show). For a linguistic classification of punning wordplay, reference will be made to Partington's wordplay account (2008). All the data will be transcribed according to the GAT2 system by Selting et al. (2009) to determine the main recurring patterns when using wordplay in conversation (like turn-taking, sequence organizations and repairs cfr. Sacks & Schegloff, 1974). This paper intends to enrich the empirical research on the conversation analysis with reference to the use of wordplay in German spoken language.

References

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